



Captain Lance L. Bardo  
Commanding Officer

Pacific Ocean

April 18, 2008

Dear MIDGETT Family and Friends,

When I woke up this morning the air temperature was 82, the sea temperature was 80, seas were calm, the sun was just creeping up over the horizon, and the prospects for hunting bad guys were excellent. It was one of those not-so-rare moments lately mixed with feelings of satisfaction, a sense of purpose and of anticipation. And as I reflected on the past month aboard MIDGETT, I was reminded of what a superb crew has been assembled here.

By way of a quick intro, I am currently assigned as the CO of the pre-commissioning command of the CGC WAESCHE, one of the new ships being constructed to replace the 378s. Since the ship won't be ready for another 10 months, so I often get the nod for 'special projects'. I have spent the last 27 years going to sea, and I am thrilled to be called to this temporary sea duty. On a personal note, my home is in the North Bay (San Francisco) where I live with Beth, my wife of 26 years, and my 15 year old daughter when I'm not at sea. I have a 19 year old son in college in Georgia and a 22 year old son.

Over the last month since I've arrived we've chased about the Eastern Pacific searching for all manner of drug smugglers. And like a well tuned team, we've been able to combine a great deal of preparation with a touch of opportunity (luck in other words) to find and interdict one go fast boat with a ton of cocaine aboard, another vessel loaded with 98 illegal immigrants destined for the U.S., and we've boarded a number of vessels suspected of being part of the support network facilitating the bad guys. Admittedly, the migrant case stirs mixed emotions - on the one hand we see nearly a hundred people with all they possess in a small back pack, leaving their native country on a marginally seaworthy wooden boat to travel over a thousand miles at sea in the hope of a better life for themselves and their families really makes one appreciate the many blessing we so often take for granted. And we pick them up and turn them back around to the poverty we know awaits them. But the consolation we have on these cases is that the boat they were on was probably not going to get there safely in any case - and we can only hope we have saved them from a tragic ending. And lest I talk about nothing but work, the crew has had the chance to visit and get a little relaxation in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and in Costa Rica. One of the many benefits of sea duty that takes a little of the sting away from being separated from loved ones is getting to see new places in the world.

Although we are on the backside of this deployment we remain focused as the next month holds more productive hunting for us that I hope your sailor will be able to relate to you when they get home. And we've changed our schedule somewhat to return to San Diego May 14<sup>th</sup> for 3 days of shipboard helicopter training that allows us to keep our certification current so we are ready to go hunting again on our next patrol. We are planning to return home as scheduled May 23<sup>rd</sup> and I hope to have the opportunity to meet some of you then. It looks like I will hand over the reins of MIDGETT the week of June 9<sup>th</sup> to CAPT Matt Miller, the permanent Prospective Commanding Officer. While this is a short term assignment for me, the crew has made me feel welcome and I know that the support they get from you back on the home front is vital.

Serving together,

Lance L. Bardo